

September 2010

Smokeyjumper Obituary: Dixon, Jerry S. (McCall 1971)

National Smokeyjumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Dixon, Jerry S. (McCall 1971)

Jerry, 62, a Life Member of the NSA, died in Seward, Alaska, September 9, 2010, to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease).

After jumping five seasons in McCall and one in Fairbanks, he became a fire management officer and a fire ecologist for the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. He also worked as a Yukon River ranger and a biologist, and enjoyed being a philosopher, climber, kayaker, extreme skier, conservationist and guide.

Jerry taught the "Quest" program for gifted students in Seward, Moose Pass and Cooper Landing. In 1997 he was named a McAuliffe Fellow, and in 2001 he was named BP Teacher of the Year for the Kenai Peninsula.

Jerry retired in 2003 because of his dismay at what he termed the "dramatic deterioration of quality education in the Seward schools and Alaska schools in general," caused by a lack of funding.

He wrote three books and many articles. Competing in wilderness ultra-marathons, Jerry traversed such courses as a brutal 180- to 200-mile course from Chicken to Central across the Tanana-Yukon uplands. He could speak four languages and had degrees in seven subject areas.

One of Jerry's books, "Wild by Alaska," tells of his journey through the last great wilderness of North America. The story spans four decades of relentless pursuit of adventures, dangers, and excitement, and features 40 years' worth of Jerry's drawings. The Jerry S. Dixon Award for Excellence in Environmental Education was created in his honor.

(end of excerpt)